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21 July 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Important Intelligence Issues Raised by the
PRM-10 Exercise

1. Before discussing important intelligence issues raised by the PRM-10 exercise, some comments on the PRM-10 exercise as a process seem appropriate. PRM-10 was an attempt to redo NSSM-246, an ambitious overview of the United States military and foreign policy options. Unfortunately, several problems arose resulting in a series of separate papers that neither satisfied the participants nor ultimate recipients. The reason for dissatisfaction can be laid in part to three major problems within the PRM-10 exercise.

2. First, there was the problem of simultaneity. That is to say, the exercise attempted to develop foreign policy and military strategy options simultaneously. This problem was especially acute for the Intelligence Community which attempted to evaluate the Alternative Integrated Military Strategies (AIMS) devised by the PRC Working Group chaired by Lynn Davis of ISA/OSD. Only general and somewhat superficial statements could be made by the Intelligence Community about the AIMS and possible Soviet reactions since there was no political context or foreign policy goals attached to the AIMS. In the end, no attempt was made to integrate the net assessment papers produced by the Huntington working groups and the AIMS.

3. Second, the methodology used by the PRC Working Group to generate the AIMS had some serious problems. The methodology attempted to generate the AIMS by integrating five sub-strategies. That process was unusually long, caused considerable initial confusion for a number of the PRC Working Group participants, and tended to

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obscure some important issues, in particular the question of alternative theater nuclear policies.

4. Third, there was a basic confusion about the role of the AIMS in generating alternative force postures. This confusion derived from the vague language of the terms of reference. Thus, there was uncertainty whether the PRC Working Group was to merely evaluate alternative strategies or to produce force posture alternatives. In the end, force posture alternatives were produced and presented in PRM-10 as "exemplary."

5. Aside from these serious problems, PRM-10 did result in some very useful documents which became part of the supporting annexes of the AIMS. In particular, Annex A, the FY-78 assessment of the conventional and strategic forces, which was chaired by the NSC Staff, is a useful first attempt. The document, although imperfect, gives a good interagency sensing of the current net capabilities of the forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. Also, the PRM-10 exercise revealed some important issues for the Intelligence Community. The following are some of those issues which are likely to command considerable attention in the near future:

a. Theater and Battlefield Nuclear Weapons -

The most glaring omission in the PRM-10 exercise was the failure of the various working groups to come to grips with the problem of theater nuclear or "gray-area" systems. This topic is likely to loom very high on the priority list of the current national security policymakers. First, there is likely to be increased interest in Soviet reactions and options to NATO's modernization of its theater and battlefield nuclear capability. The introduction of the long-range cruise missile is the most important current issue. Second, there is likely to be interest in how the Soviets will modify their doctrine and equipment to changes in NATO's battlefield capability such as the introduction of enhanced radiation warheads. This is likely to generate requirements for the Intelligence Community to give more complete judgments about the WP's capacity to conduct nuclear theater and battlefield operations.

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b. Warsaw Pact Sustained Combat Capability -
The question of sustained conventional combat capability of the WP appeared as it did in NSSM-246. The intelligence community acknowledged that current estimates of the endurance of the WP in a long (greater than 30 days) conventional war in Central Europe is fraught with uncertainty. During the force planning exercise associated with the AIMS, a US Army estimate was used. That estimate presumes the Soviet Union can sustain a 130 division force in Central Europe indefinitely. That assumption drove the force sizing requirements for those AIMS which planned for a sustained NATO defense. Not surprisingly, the force requirements for the USA were very large. Given the emphasis placed on improving NATO's conventional warfighting capability, this issue is likely to loom large as the force planners request a more refined judgment about the WP's sustained combat capability.

c. Reactions to NATO Conventional Improvements -
Related to the first question are those judgments the Intelligence Community is willing to make about Soviet options in reaction to a significant improvement in NATO's conventional warfighting capability. The Community's judgments on Soviet reactions found in Annex C can be viewed only as a first attempt. In the light of the current focus on improving NATO's conventional warfighting capability, a priority is likely to be placed by high-level policymakers in possible Soviet reactions and options to the proposed force improvements. In particular, the Persian Gulf theater looms large in the context of protracted European war scenarios.

d. US-USSR Military Options Outside Europe -
Some large unknowns exist in the judgments made in PRM-10 about Soviet and US military options outside Europe in the event of a NATO/WP war -- a subject for further analysis. In particular, it would be useful to consider what counterthreats are available to the Soviets to deter US conventional attacks on their homeland during a European war.

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e. NATO/WP Mobilization Scenarios - One of the most useful results of the FY-78 NSC Contingency Assessment was to clearly differentiate the two elements which would cause a lag in any NATO response to a WP build-up. Those components are the lag before the Intelligence Community gives the policy-maker a warning of war, and the lag is caused by a delay in issuing orders for military mobilization measures. Thus, in addition to delay, there is also uncertainty about the warning. The current NIE on warning deals with the Intelligence Community's judgment about the lag associated with warning. Future demands are likely to be made on the Community to consider its role during the mobilization phase that follows that warning.



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Special Projects Team
Strategic Evaluation Center, OSR

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